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Avian/Pandemic Flu Newsletter

THE OFFICIAL AVIAN INFLUENZA NEWSLETTER OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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AVIAN INFLUENZA: Current Global Situation Update

Avian Influenza Cases in Humans

Since January 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported human cases of Avian Influenza A/ (H5N1) in more than twelve countries like Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Egypt, Djibouti, Iraq, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Nigeria.

Cumulative Number of Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza (H5N1)

Cases reported to WHO through February 28, 2008. WHO only reports laboratory-confirmed cases.

- Total human cases of H5N1 (confirmed) = **369**
- Total human deaths from H5N1= **234**

http://www.who.int/avian_influenza/cases2008_02_28.html

Currently, there are no reported human OR animal cases of the highly pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1) in United States.

Egypt - *February 28, 2008*

The Ministry of Health and Population has announced a new human case of avian influenza A (H5N1) virus infection. The case is a 4 years old female from El-Edwa district, Menia governorate. She developed symptoms on February 21st and was hospitalized on February 24th. She is receiving treatment and is in a stable condition. Investigations into the source of her infection indicate exposure to sick poultry in the week prior to onset of symptoms.

Of the 44 cases confirmed to date in Egypt, 19 have been fatal.

http://www.who.int/csr/don/2008_02_28/en/index.html

Viet Nam - *26 February 2008*

The Ministry of Health has confirmed a new case of human infection of H5N1 avian influenza. The case has been confirmed by the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (NIHE).

The case is a 23 -year old female from Cam Khe district, Phu Tho province. She developed symptoms on February 14th was hospitalized on February 19thand died on February 25th. The case had contact with sick and dead poultry prior to her illness.

Of the 105 cases confirmed to date in Vietnam, 51 have been fatal.

http://www.who.int/csr/don/2008_02_26b/en/index.html

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

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Avian Influenza Cases in Humans (Cont.)

Chinese Woman Dies of Bird Flu - *February 26, 2008*

BEIJING — A migrant worker has died of the H5N1 virus in southern China, the Hong Kong government said Tuesday, as the country confirmed its fourth outbreak of bird flu among poultry this year.

The woman who died Monday in Shanwei, a coastal city in eastern Guangdong province, tested positive for the deadly H5N1 avian flu virus, Hong Kong's Health Department said in a statement issued after receiving confirmation from China's Health Ministry.

Her death marked the country's 20th fatality from the deadly H5N1 virus and its third this year. Since 2003 when the virus began ravaging poultry stocks in Asia, China has had 19 human deaths from bird flu, the WHO says.

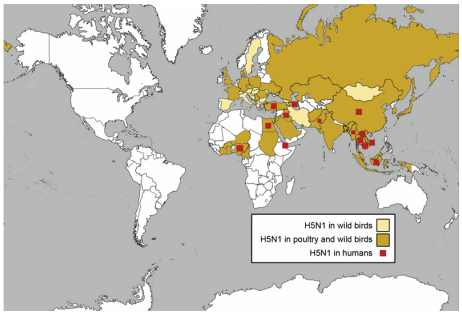
Three outbreaks of bird flu in poultry were reported in China in 2008, two in the far western region of Tibet and another in the northwestern region of Xinjiang.

http://www.physorg.com/news123230218.html

Avian Influenza Cases in Birds

17 Countries Report H5N1 Avian Influenza in Domestic Poultry/Wildlife in 2008: (*Updated February 27, 2008*)

- Bulgaria
- China
- Egypt
- Germany
- India
- Iran
- Israel
- Laos
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Saudi Arabia
- Thailand
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- Vietnam reports five new outbreaks in domestic poultry (February 2008)



http://www.oie.int/.htm

FAO Newsroom — *February 27, 2008*

India is to be commended for its successful efforts to control the recent worst-ever outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in the state of West Bengal, FAO said today. The agency warned, however, that intensive surveillance should continue in high-risk areas as the possibility of new outbreaks remains high.

“Intensive culling in the predominantly backyard poultry sector appears to have stopped the disease in its tracks,” said FAO veterinary expert Mohinder Oberoi after a recent field trip to the affected areas.

“The political and financial commitment from the government of India and the state of Bengal to stamp out the disease was instrumental in this success. Public awareness campaigns, a strong command chain from districts to villages, compensation payments and an effective collaboration between animal and human health departments at field level, have been the key factors for the success,” Oberoi said. No new disease outbreaks have been discovered since February 2, 2008.

http://www.fao.org/newsroom/2008/1000798/.html

Bird flu resurfaces in N Laos

LAOS - *February 13, 2008*

A fresh outbreak of bird flu among fowls has struck Laos' southern Luang Namtha province, Lao newspaper on Tuesday quoted a local agriculture official as saying.

Bird Flu Hits 40 Districts in Bangladesh

BANGLADESH - *February 12, 2008*

The bird flu which is spreading fast in Bangladesh recently has so far affected 40 out of the total 64 districts of the country, leading English newspaper The Independent reported Tuesday.

Link Between Migratory Birds, Avian Influenza Unsubstantiated

PAKISTAN - *February 11, 2008*

There is no scientific evidence available, so far, proving that migratory birds are responsible for the recent or all previous outbreaks of bird flu in Pakistan or elsewhere in the world, said wildlife experts and virologists.

NATIONAL NEWS

University of California Irvine (UCI) - Study results detail H5N1 migration, provide means to measure intervention success

February 26, 2008

Several strains of the bird flu virus that raged across southern China were blocked from entering Thailand and Vietnam, UC Irvine researchers have discovered.

This first-ever statistical analysis of influenza A H5N1's genetic diversity helps scientists better understand how the virus migrates and could, in the future, help health officials determine whether efforts to thwart its spread were successful.
"Some countries appear more exposed to bird flu invasion than others. Learning that is a good step in discovering which social and ecological factors promote, or, on the other hand, hamper the virus' spread," said Robert G. Wallace, a postdoctoral researcher and lead author of the study.

The results appear online Feb. 27 in the journal *PLoS ONE*.

Since its emergence in 1996, H5N1 has only sporadically been passed from birds to humans. Although only about 350 human cases of this influenza have been recorded worldwide, its high mortality rate raises concerns that if the virus mutates in such a way that humans can pass it on, a deadly flu pandemic may result. More than 60 percent of humans who contract the virus die from it.

For more information on the study click on: http://today.uci.edu/news/release_detail.asp?key=1735

Study results detail H5N1 migration, provide means to measure intervention success.

Report urges USDA to tighten oversight of pandemic planning

February 11, 2008 (CIDRAP News)

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made notable progress on plans to detect and contain H5N1 avian influenza outbreaks in birds, but some management missteps at the agency could hamper its response capability, according to a recent audit by the department's inspector general.

In the 33-page report, the inspector general's office reviewed 55 tasks assigned to the USDA in the Bush administration's national pandemic influenza strategy that were to be completed by February 2007. The USDA is responsible for leading the veterinary response to an H5N1 threat.

The agency has made significant progress on initiatives such as developing an interagency outbreak-response playbook, implementing a bird bio-security program, and creating scripted risk messages, inspectors determined. But inadequate management controls in some areas—such as lack of testing for new or revised procedures—undermine confidence that the agency is ready to respond to an H5N1 threat to US birds and poultry, the report says. http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/avianflu/news/feb1108usda.html

LOCAL AND STATE NEWS

Local News/ Outreach

Activities related to Pandemic Influenza education in the regions continue with more than 142,556 educational material distributed to various community locations. In addition, a total of 141 presentations have been provided to staff and community residents. San Diego will soon begin trainings for its Ambassador Program, an education and outreach effort to train the general public, through businesses, schools and organizations about how to prepare for an influenza pandemic.

State/ Federal News

No new updates at this time.

PANDEMIC/ AVIAN FLU IN THE MEDIA

Voice of America.com - *February 27, 2008*

The World Health Organization says that while there have already been three deaths from bird flu in China this year, there are no signs the deadly disease is becoming a bigger problem.

In a statement Wednesday, the WHO's top representative in China, Hans Troedsson, says the three recent cases were not unexpected considering the winter season. Bird flu tends to be more active during the colder months of the year. Troedsson also stressed that all three cases involved people who contracted the disease from poultry, not from human to human transmissions.

China has the world's largest poultry population and is at the center of the fight against bird flu, which scientists fear could mutate into a form that could pass easily between people, sparking a pandemic.

http://www.voanews.com/english/2008-02-27-voa21.cfm

CIDRAP News - *February 22, 2008*

An official from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which is a collaborating laboratory for the World Health Organization (WHO), said Indonesia's health ministry is sending 15 H5N1 influenza samples for virus characterization, the first the country has shared since last year.

Nancy Cox, MD, chief of the CDC's influenza division, said at a media update on the flu season that Indonesia's health minister called the CDC on February 20,2008 to say the country would like to resume sending samples.

Cox said Indonesia's health ministry shipped 15 clinical samples to the CDC on February 22nd. She said the samples are from two patients whose infections were confirmed by the WHO on February 5th and February 12th. The two patients were a 27-year-old woman from a Jakarta suburb who died on February 2nd and a 15-year-old girl from another Jakarta suburb who was hospitalized with an H5N1 infection after her mother died of the disease.

"Based on past experience, the samples should arrive over the weekend or early next week," Cox said. "We expect to obtain results over the next 2 weeks."

In December 2006, Indonesia—the nation hardest hit by the H5N1 virus—stopped sending samples to WHO collaborating centers to protest pharmaceutical companies' use of the samples to develop vaccines that Indonesia said would be too expensive for developing nations to buy. A WHO group that has been meeting to resolve the virus-sharing issue failed to forge an agreement the last time it met in November.

Indonesia has shared only a few samples since the end of 2006. Last May it sent three to the WHO in advance of the World Health Assembly, but WHO officials later said the specimens contained no viable viruses. Indonesia also sent a sample to the CDC lab in August to show that an outbreak of human cases on the island of Bali did not involve a mutated strain.

Sari Setiogi, a spokeswoman for the WHO, told CIDRAP News that the WHO has not received any details from Indonesia about the samples it is sharing and could not confirm the development.

Siti Fadilah Supari, Indonesia's health minister, said that the samples it sent are meant only for risk assessment, according to a report from the Associated Press (AP). "If they want to develop them into a seed virus they must notify us. If they make them into a vaccine our rights over [the vaccine] will be recognized," she told the AP.

Supari's announcement came at the end of a tumultuous week regarding the country's stance on sharing its H5N1 samples. Earlier this week, media outlets reported that Supari published a book alleging that the United States intended to produce a biological weapon with the H5N1 virus and the WHO was conspiring to profit from H5N1 vaccines.

Details about the book, titled *Time for the World to Change: God is Behind the Avian Influenza Virus*, were given in a February 8th press release from Indonesia's health ministry. However, the release did not list a publisher for the 182-page book.
Officials from the US State Department and WHO denied the claims Supari apparently made in her book, the Sydney (Australia) *Morning Herald* reported .

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono reportedly ordered Supari to recall copies of her book, though he had authored its introduction, according to *Morning Herald* reports.
However, at a meeting with health ministry officials on February 20th, Yudhoyono said he supported Supari's demand for fair international virus-sharing policies, according to a report from Reuters.

"We certainly need to form a partnership with WHO and friendly nations. We can only proceed if we agree on building and implementing a fair cooperation framework," he said at a news conference, according to Reuters.

http://www.cidrap/avianflu/news/feb2208.html

PANDEMIC/AVIAN FLU IN THE MEDIA

EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES JOURNAL

Cost-effectiveness of Antiviral Stockpiling and Near-Patient Testing for Potential Influenza Pandemic - *February 2008*

A decision analytical model was developed to investigate the cost-effectiveness of stockpiling antiviral (AV) drugs for a potential influenza pandemic in the United Kingdom and the possible role of near-patient testing in conserving AV drug stocks. Under base-case assumptions (including a fixed stockpile that was smaller than the clinical attack rate), the treat-only option (treating all symptomatic patients with AV drugs) would be considered cost-effective (£1,900–£13,700 per quality-adjusted life year [QALY] gained, depending on the fatality scenario), compared with no intervention (nonintervention but management of cases as they arise).

The test-treat option (testing all symptomatic patients but treating those with positive tests results only) would result in moderate gains in QALYs over the treat-only option but at relatively large additional costs. Stockpiling sufficient AV drugs (but not near-patient tests) to treat all patients with clinical cases would be cost-effective, provided AV drugs are effective at preventing deaths from pandemic influenza.

http://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/14/2/267.htm

Experimental Infection and Natural Contact Exposure of Dogs with Avian Influenza Virus (H5N1)

February 2008 - Experiments that exposed influenza virus (H5N1)–infected cats to susceptible dogs did not result in intra-species or interspecies transmission. Infected dogs showed increased body temperatures, viral RNA in pharyngeal swabs, and seroconversion but not fatal disease.

Dogs are susceptible to HPAI virus (H5N1) infection. In our study, they reacted with a transient rise in body temperature and in some instances with specific antibodies. Viral RNA was detected in pharyngeal swabs. Infectious virus could not be reisolated, and transmission of virus to a contact dog and cats did not occur. Contact exposure experiments of influenza virus (H5N1)–infected cats with uninfected dogs did not result in interspecies transmission. The different outcome of infection with the same dose of influenza virus (H5N1) suggests that cats are more susceptible than dogs to disease. However, the experiments were performed with healthy animals; concurrent infections, impaired immune functions, and changing viral characteristics might lead to aggravated infections. Also, since some dog breeds are genetically predisposed for certain viral and bacterial diseases, other breeds might be more susceptible to influenza virus (H5N1) infection (e.g., equine influenza virus [H3N8] caused disease predominantly in small groups of dogs of particular breeds, including greyhounds). Therefore, dogs may have a role in adaptation of HPAI virus (H5N1) to mammals and its subsequent transmission to humans.

http://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/14/2/308.htm

POPcitymedia.com - *February 6, 2008*

Pitt researchers test novel vaccine to combat deadly avian flu

A safer and potentially more effective vaccine to combat the most common and deadliest strain of avian flu has been developed by University of Pittsburgh researchers and a biotechnology company.

Developed by Novavax, Inc. of Rockville, MD, the vaccine was successful in its first human clinical trial, although final trials and approval, which includes a fast-tracked FDA process, mean the vaccine won't be ready until some date in the future.

http://www.popcitymedia.com/avianflu0206.aspx

Voice of America News - *February 2, 2008*

Officials in eastern India say they are concluding efforts to bring the nation's worst outbreak of bird flu under control.

The animal resources minister for the state of West Bengal, Anisur Rahaman, says health workers are expected to complete the slaughter of nearly three million poultry by later Saturday. He says the next step is to sanitize backyard poultry yards and coops.

AP Photo

Indian health officials walk through Namopara Bazar village to cull birds to curb the spread of bird flu in Margram, north of Calcutta, 1/18/08.

There have been no confirmed human cases of bird flu in India, and state officials say they will continue to send blood samples for testing to make sure the virus has not spread to people.

http://www.voanews.com/2008-02-02-voa21.cfm

We're on the Web!
http://sdpandemicfacts.org/resources.htm#newsletters

RESOURCES

- **County Vector Control Program's (888) 551-INFO (4636)** for info on how to protect birds, or to report dead birds.
- **HHSA's Avian and Pandemic Flu Info Line (619) 515-6900** for info regarding avian and pandemic flu.
- Educational materials are available for public distribution and are also downloadable from the county website: **www.sdbirdflu.org** or **www.sdpandemicflu.org**. Click on "Pandemic Flu".
- National Geographic International Edition: **www.nationalgeographic.com**
- World Health Organization (WHO): **www.who.int**
- Federal Dept. of Health & Human Services: **www.pandemicflu.gov**
- Federal CDC site: **www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic**
- State of California: **www.dhs.ca.gov**
- County of San Diego: **www.sdbirdflu.org**
- The Poultry Site: **www.thepoultrysite.com**

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